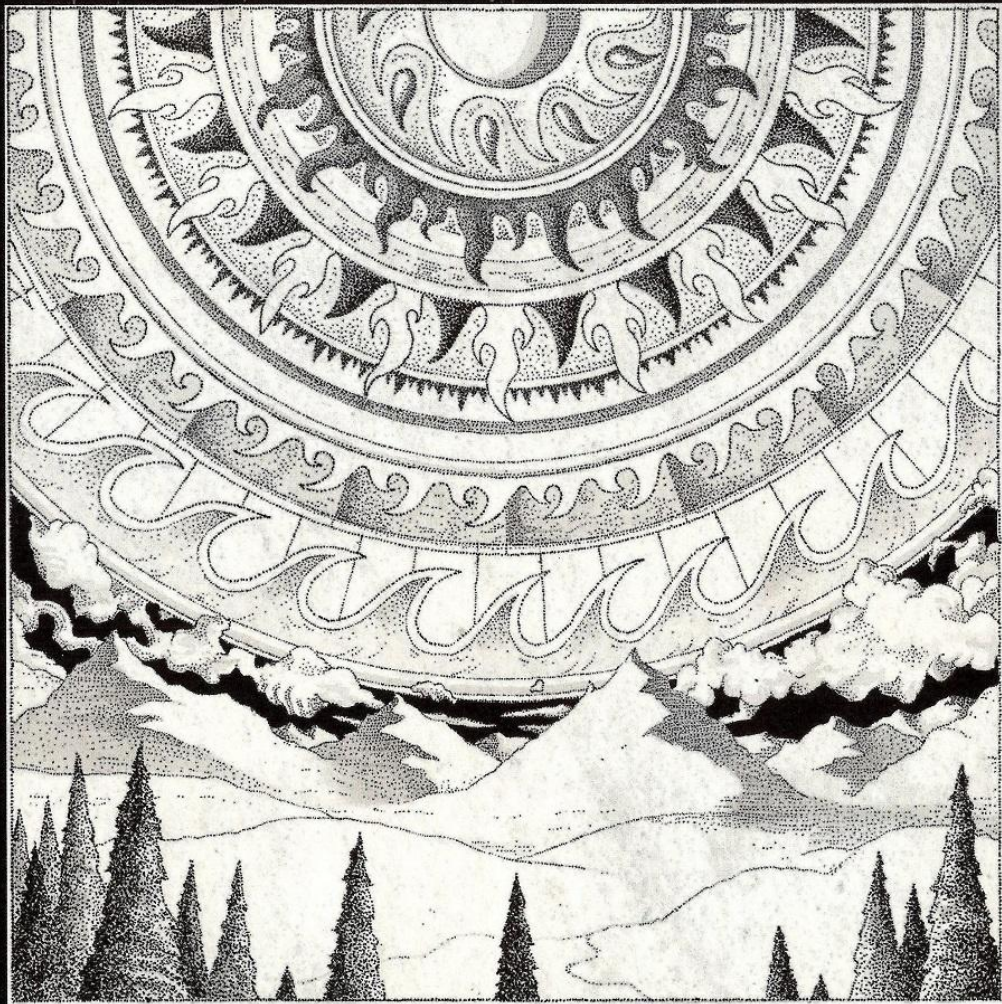


dark tranquillity

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Skydancer ☞
Of Chaos and Eternal Night



Nightfall By The Shore Of Time

Lyrics: Sundin

A shimmertrace of divinity lost
in the beckoning midnight vault
(We are) lulled within the wake
of a cold November's nightfall

Nightfall...

A communion of life and eternity,
of Races scattered in the depths
of the universal dark

Above us minds went sailing free
and blossomed in the vast nocturnal sea

Paragon of beauty,
Oh, spark of Creation;
We march to the rhythm of the Night

Starborn flew the Dove of Man
in the eventide of life,
whose wonders crowned
our yesterdays with light

Fire - Earth - Water - Wind

We lived beneath the waning moon of truth
And danced in hunger for the Powermind
(of Youth)

Like the dark to a dying Flame;
Sweepingly embracing its grieving remains
Defiantly blazing the black that awaits
Counting the days 'til the new Age awaits

Times' lustful cyclones arise,
Piercing the fairest of Skies
In elysian awakening of spiritual glory
we see what our history belies

Meadows of Asphodel
Burning in the hunted dawn
Tragedies die among fiery flames
as the firewood of Wisdom is sawn

Our Guardians were blind
My lightbringer ephemeral

Within the heart of all;
A cold and dusky melancholy night,
as ever sullied the fair face of light

Whose seeds of life they grind
To dust, of vapour is our mind
...evermore

Paragon of beauty,
Oh, spark of Creation;
We march to the rhythm of the Night

Nightfall by the shore of time,
a tidal wave of fire and woe
Swept away with the last of life
the core of the enigma as bestowed

Our crystal spirits melt to flow
the mountainside along
To join as one with seas of old
in symbiotic songs:

"Communion... Within the Oversoul
of the Universe"

We are but fragment of Eternity,
pale shadows of what we'll once be

In life's outer regions I will find
the foremost Tranquility
Chanting the odes of Magonia
A soulstream in flight to the Otherworld

...to the Otherworld

Crimson Winds

Lyrics: Stanne

Force of anger, Mordant senseless wrath
Manifold is the Terminus of oneself
Invoke ye lord of the Left-behinds
Preserve a seat for the weakened minds

Reserving that limpid yet so used
Veil of deceiving hostility
Close now is the threshold of insanity

Neverending force of hatred,
fear, them darkened spheres
Deprecated existence, Manifest of darkness be

Manifest for unspeakable actions
Fire sermons to condemn those fallen
Fallen from pride, fallen from the manger
Father, lend to me thy wisdom
Thy wisdom of old

Now all is clear:
*Pierce the side of the neverending blindness
Then thereby be it stated in the name of the forgotten
Father of Light, Father of Darkness
-I will not implore to no master of thine!"

Everflaming

Intemperate malice in the extreme
Forms are twisted, Everfalling
Crescent skies, the wait, The calling
Eyes unseeing, Stars rearrange
Tears of our blood running from the runes

Misgivings fall silent
Excitement stir up the spheres
My sweet Norderland

To reap the fields of ignorance and lies
Trails of omission swept away

Never be found again
Release of agony
So Hebulous, yet ominous is the Terminus
Flames of Hatred burn me
Firesoul • Hear me, Blinded fool
Take heed to the forgotten twilight
Now kneel to the omniscient twilight

Crimson Winds
Ornaments in the dark
The weep of pain
Drowned by tears of Northerly blood
Runes of force,
Fulfillment of a sombre ordeal I know

*Pierce the side of the neverending blindness
Then thereby be it stated in the name of the forgotten
Father of Light, Father of Darkness
-I will not implore to no master of thine!"

Everflaming

Everlasting lust for wisdom and for solitude
Coming of dawn, Knowledge in the image of flesh

Unbridled to the world I wander now
Light cast upon this place of mysteries
Truth hurts for my tongue is venomous

Unbound yet bound for disbelief
Darkness, I grasp your every nerve
Everflaming now and forevermore

A Bolt Of Blazing Gold

Lyrics: Sundin

A bolt of blazing gold,
lifted from the horizon's edge
Another radiant dawn sends new hope,
avowed my hearty pledge

My yearning to be part
of nature's truthful solitude
Of wisdom's inner light
that shines in mystic multitude
The guiding source within,
so few of us will ever know
And few will ever climb
the great world-tree from which we've grown
But those who seek will find
the rhythm that vibrates high and far
And rearrange the cosmic threads,
the pattern of the Weave of Stars

A bolt of blazing gold,
a sunfire in zenith hurled
Oh, wingless skydancer,
rejoiced upon the warmth unfurled
What wonders do you hold ensnared
with your mighty heart?
What secrets may be mine
to brother-share as we depart?

Of richest emerald forged,
my soul still rises, longingly
From inferno's winding caverns,
through dark air soaring, restlessly
If silence was enough!
No words can grasp my starkest thoughts
No language known to man
portrays my naked sentiment

A bolt of blazing gold,
swallowed by the waveless sea
The ocean-winds set sail,
in breeze towards their destiny
On solarbeams they rode,
white sea-gull-wings in harmony
For a moment's startling glimpse
a sienna-burnt tranquility

Oh father of the coloured sky,
unwear thy robe of shadowhood

Let nature's soul once clash again
'neath blooming glades of goldenwood

We're the ones who seek
to dance to fallen serenades
The magic hymns of gold;
as softly sung, the sunlight fades
...away

Of richest emerald forged,
my soul still rises, longingly
From inferno's winding caverns,
through dark air soaring, restlessly
If silence was enough!
No words can grasp my starkest thoughts
No language known to man
portrays my naked sentiment

A world of silent stone,
as frozen in the nightly sky
In heaven's dark recesses laid,
no living soul draws nigh
For seconds all is still,
no moonlight heaves throughout the dark
Nor do the heavens breathe,
no dryads wreathe within the dark

Within my dark domain...

In Tears Bereaved

Lyrics: Sundin

Beautiful, oh web of stars
that looms amid the sons of Earth
Enfolds me in thine sylvan arms
that unity's vehement charms
befalls a weary son of Earth

Beautiful, in tears bereaved
in sylphlike sadness, left to bleed

Bewailed upon a bed of thorns,
impaled, a heart, on sorrow's horns
A seeker's ode to thee I read
My tearful soul thy mourning heed

The stream that leaves thine open wounds;
A life-blood licked by hungry hounds
No verdant balm to soothe our wounds
Wherefore betwixt two worlds I'm torn,
Ere thrall'd by sin I'll die - forlorn

This slumbering world of shallow fools
may one day clasp the cosmic Hell,
lest journeymen by Earthen rules
bring forth the truth for which Angels fell

To the earth and sky and sea
I call that thou may answer me;
Father of Nature, of beast and mankind,
my soul for thy love, my tears for thy pain
...An Eden in fire,
what lives shan't remain

For when I live under a different sky,
beneath the ethereal hills the clouds passing by
Remember the time of which I cried to be part
Remember these words, for they have flown
from my heart

Skywards

Lyrics: Stanne

Cast out
from a world of self-deceit
in senseless fear of denial

Forgive the others indifference
and on paths of wisdom trait
In grief thou shalt not wander
With hopefilled heart now walk

Do not fear the slow proceeding
Fear only the stillness of invention

Mocking words and actions a defeat
for intellect and mind

Saveth me for I know not how
to break free from these chains of scorn
Oh I wonder how can I turn the sense of doubt
in the minds of them all

Our needs are depending in images in life
and the more you agree in the far more they ask

I am an outcast but I am free to speak
the words from my heart
And when I know the secrets
in the minds of the weak
I shall return and be grateful
For the lessons learned from the past
Hear me, See me
I am now forever one with myself

I sense the forces that deep within me burn
I smell remains of fear forever gone
I feel now comfort with who I have to be
Now is the time for retributive thoughts

To be content is happiness
Not the overflow of material things
that we seek to make a stand
in this era of greed and self-inflicted
pain in the shape of disappointment

Do not fear the slow proceeding
That's all I ask of thee

What lies ahead you will never know
so come prepared

Oh I wish for thee to see
the vast plains and the fields

The open seas, The wailing trees
The treasures of my kingdom
reach the level of understanding now
exploring, Considering the actions of the past

On a journey forever

Still you're in the water struggling
while I clasp the skies
Can you see the lifeblood dripping
from the cheek of ever scorn?

Yes I can!

I am an outcast but I am free to speak
the words from my heart
And when I know the secrets
in the minds of the weak
I shall return and be grateful
For the lessons learned from the past
Hear me, See me
I am now forever one with myself

Through Ebony Archways

Lyrics: Stanne

There is a silent man in a tower
Mute in a blinded world
Yet words dance on virgin lips
Freezing the winds of blood

Clad in layers of darkest velvet
Drenched in the gloomy light of dawn
...All Black

And in his wait
for the grand finale
Standing atop of the stairs
From dawn to dusk
his heart's ablaze

Uncovering words from an obsolete state of mind
Sharpen them! Turn them into arrows!
Descend into grief - Without a bow no arrows fly
...Bitter Black

Passing through the ebony archways
Hand in hand with the wisdom of stars
Wisdom dressed in blackest array

There is no man in that tower
Walking the shores in black
Bitter frost now bite the walls of hope
No traces in the sand...

Shadow Duet

Lyrics: Sundin

Voice of the Shadow of Beauty - sung by Anders Friden
Voice of the Shadow of Darkness - sung by Mikael Stanne

shadows play
in my wilderness' mindscape
they seek
one spiteful and wicked
one humble and meek

a windswept pale landscape
of edified thought
/two frictional forces
a triad have brought/

woven
a soft breeze whispers slowly
within me
in the valley of my mind
the aerial mists sink falling
and its breath both foul and holy
is like the deer to a dying hind
slowly traversing the atmosphere
calling

*wordless, yet in soul so true
nameless, yet it lives in you
shapeless like the purity of pain
lawful when all fear is slain*

one shadow of beauty caressing the flowers
the paleness of winter reflects in her eyes

deity of stardom
enticer of stardoom
so soft and so silent
maternal - eternal
serenity fades
blinded by visions of twilight nocturnal
with the darkening of skies

*one shadow of darkness
a shade of deep hate
a wanderer's spectre with fury ablaze
in sheets of sharp silver
laid youthful to die
reborn into vengeance
dark flames dance in grace*

dark flames dance in grace
in the grace of storms

one shadow of beauty
one shadow of darkness
sailing free on the sea within my mind

surging dark oceans
perpetual waters
creator of life
and reclamer of souls
mother ocean
watching the deep fjords uneasily moving
whipping the white waves towards the cold air
rising like swans
in a scarred, sudden motion
a cascade of lost feathers
adrift on the sea

Hark!
a serenade in the tongue of the wind

the sighs of the centuries, so sonorous in the bower
hovering further athwart a leafy cover
a shelter for those whose time's wind make them wither
and therefore they choose to guide this time-wind hither

alas, in tune with the tide of time
i was, but I'm not
nor I'll be with its pride

*yes, aeons have flown
but more is to come
for I know time*
but time is not eternal, their life stars not immortal
a friend that I greet with open arms
setting souls can never
a brother soul of deadly harm
pass through the pearly portal
no bliss be given
and joy
nor joy

*flowing down the gates of hell
fire*

i cry for you...
*don't spill your tears for me
but for your kit and kin*
my scions of light?
deprived of the lust and the treasure of pleasure
which is the fuel for life
and glory

silent your dark desires
within entirety's light

solitude
sanctity
sanctuary
sanctum
tranquillity

hear me
*you who hold the fate of stars in hand
before creation's eye I stand
my soul set free
in summerland*

mighty the strands of the universe
a chaosvoid's tomb of dead worlds
hark
what?
divinity flows in your heart
cast it alight, the seed of all art
slowly reborn from a sunless state of mind
silent, you fool
a cradle of roses
embedded in stillness and shade

silent, you fool
thine words are untrue
remember Eudymion's crestfallen tears
serene art the gods, yet pain is their way
be touched by the heavens, his hellfire nears

a silent divinity, now see your body of air
free now your heavenly body of air

come bathe in the rays of the all-seeing one
holding the fate of all life in both hands
breathing life-force
like gold made from sand

my winged steed of moonlight
black stallion of thunder
we rode above the greenish earth
and tore the green asunder
but what you left bleeding
destroyed a soulforsaken world
and your deeds of sharp silver
decoyed a mindforsaken herd

a duet of shadows
a duet of shadows

a duet of thoughts
a duet of thoughts
of beings we feed
with the dust of our thoughts
residing within us
the two-fold wheel of life
of insight created: a triad of jewels

a thin leaf of the life-tree's truth

My Faeryland Forgotten

Lyrics: Sundin

Labyrinth of time...
Mine alone for now and ever more
(I'm all alone...)

...and I flew
above sepulchral monoliths,
nebulously dancing beneath the dew
(Of morning, in ye twilight land of old)
Abiding teardrops borne by thorns,
thine fragments I twine true
(In mourning, stream adorned in rage untold)

...flow adorned in rage untold
Eternal - forever - more
And they'll forever grow
and hold in heart what springs anew

From the shadows glades unwitnessed
which light the flames
from deep within where we all grew
...Everlasting ember-glow

Labyrinth of Time,
in harmony confined

Thus the dark heat from
beyond the stars

engulfed a world of fear still robed in ice
A throne in fire dies...
Pulsating through the skies

He who wore the gown
shall drown the "Reich of tears" in cries
Enthroned in fire dies...
A kingdom's last demise

And I know...
The ardent hearth midst life and death
won't end my journey morrowless
(I won't laugh in mirth all sorrowless)

Come, fly afloat on a wave of emotions,
of crestfallen scorn
Oh, this my whirlwind of darkness
a tide I once lulled but alas now withdrawn

Now...hand in hand with sorrow
towards the still, perpetual seas
Into the tranquil depths of solitude
in bliss my spirit flees

Through the wind I will go
To my twilight land, alone
Where sanctuary is mine
Within my throne world, my labyrinth of time

And he who is the God
of an infinite shape and faces,
ever weaving fates of life
upon the pattern of his traces
In the Golden Dawn of Winter
he'll stand risen from the night
in serenity all solemn,
clad in moonlight's milky white

Through the wind I will go
To my twilight land, alone
Where sanctuary is mine
Within the hands of this labyrinth of time

Labyrinth of time...
Eternal - forever - more
Time...infinity of mind
Divinity of life

Labyrinth of time
In harmony confined.

Burn - upon my
Might - by my
Command - into the fire

Your throne of fire fell...
Bestowed upon your Hell

Burnt shall be your
"Might", and your
command shan't drown my fire
(...My Faeryland Forgotten)

...Mine alone for now and ever more

Alone

Lyrics: Sordin

"Let me die", I cried as the curtain fell
and I stared in woe at the world before me
My weeping eyes could not bear to tell
or the shattered kingdom in ruins before me

What became of the lands that were?
A pearl in the nest of memories
Forever gone...departed by the minds of man

Scavengers, feeding on your mother's blood
Parasites of life, with my heart I condemn
your ignorant ways

Like the leaves of the high trees
I wither and fall

Borne by autumnal winds
to my funeral hall

I'm all alone in the grip of the silent sadness

I have been told to honour life
and what therein I'll find
but if all I see is darkness,
let me die and wake up blind
As the gleaming blade before me,
singing lullabies of loss
Whispering "Death is your redeemer
to the Paradise you've lost"

Mankind, evoker of inferno
Let me burn your honoured
Crown of Creation
and dethrone you to ashes
for aeons to come

Why should I stay here
where I do not belong?
Of weakness burns my within
An empty shell

I've lost the way to the sanctity I need

I'll greet the dawn that brings no life,
no frail beams of sun to cleanse the black night
My mournful roam has ended

I hide in the shadows white binding my time,
sheltered from this world which disorderly rhyme
with the fury of damnation

Once I held in my hand the starlight of Eden
and the white sky lay open in a soul that was free
(But the years flew so fast as the shadows were cast
and I woke up one morning with no reason to be)

I'm all alone in the shade of the nameless sorrow
I'm all alone within a shadowfire of fear

Take me home to whence I came
Where I'll find light to feed my flame of life

Or my heart will die without a whisper of hope...



Of chaos and eternal night

Lyrics: Stranne

This is a tale long to live but alas so short to tell
by the wind and by time, by everything that flees
A torment of my liking: exploring extremes

All thoughts secluded as fear stalks its bloodied soil
In the winding path where a chain now rattles,
With links merely death can break
Stains of pride - derelict
In feverish visions of agonising light
Pulsating rhythms unpure

So pound the drum and strike the chords of chaos
So scream out to the skies:
Of Chaos and Eternal Night

Never is the dark any threat to my existence
Comforting ravens claws grip the stars that fell tonight
The stealth of infinite beauty
Nevertheless heaven fell tonight

Racing along with the strangled teardrop
Life's elixir in benevolent lust
Slit open the throat that is virtue
Let fire ravage its caverns with joy

Ardent but silent in twilight resigned
Delivered from virtue in vehement plight
Yet ask not of your vanity
(The hooved agitator in your creed)
To let loose all the stars of heaven
Stray across the vault your seed

Concealed cravings must through fulfilment be broken
Hide no longer behind the veil of unconvincing lies

So pound the drum and strike the chords of chaos
So scream out to the skies
Of Chaos and Eternal Night

I've seen fires waving patterns
Forging ornaments - hidden from a world of distrust
Grace through hatred
Of Chaos and Eternal Night

In shadows now vengeful waiting out your bitter foe
The mirror distorts

Sinful is the perceiving eye
Tearless in nondescript form
Scarlet secrets tell of nightmarish fear
Illusions that speak of endless night
A venture in terms of one hazardous journey
into Chaos and Eternal Night

Deliver me from virtue,
Hidden no more beneath tender veil of lies
And let 'em all out;
unseen and sinful
... Of Chaos and Eternal Night

With the flaming shades of fall

Lyrics: Stranne/Sundin

Colours burst in wild explosions;
Fiery, flaming shades of fall
All in accord with my pounding heart
Behold the autumnweaver

In bronze and yellow dying
Colours unfold into dreams
In hordes of a thousand and one
The bleeding

Unwearing their masks to the last notes of summer
Their flutes and horns in nightly swarming

Colours burst within
Spare me those unending fires!
Bestowed upon the flaming shades of fall

September flies beyond our reach
As the flames reborn their fall
October is the art we teach
With the Flaming Shades of Fall

November
Robe of prophet - heart of false redeemer
Night whispers as the flaming shades of fall now die

Darkness, wild and unchained
Towards its heart we plunge
We must crush the false redeemer
With the flaming shades of fall

Away, delight, away

Lyrics: Stanne

As false as our minds
our eyes refuse to see
They claw for the falseness in me
From where all life springs anew
We are cleansed through the crystal fire

Fill me with sound
Fill me with hatred
Let my life bring life to the soil
The soil beneath my feet

Messenger of pain
Sailing silence
Commander of my sorrow
Riding rage

This is my garden
so leave me be

Infinity is eternal
- never born
so it may never die

Colours speak my name
Through the crowns I am baptised in the
First gnawing rays from a blackened sun
In the name of my blood I curse thee
Shelter me under the trees
Spread your twilight wings

My broken body is dripping with sin

Your skin so delicate
Your undemanding bliss will carry me far

I bid farewell to this godforsaken land
Nevermore shall I return
I join with the riders on the horizon
For they are my blood!
For they are my saviours!

They bring me hatred, bring me fire
They take me down to the land I know not
Then crush me - Take me down

Then they build me once more again
Slayer of my anger - sailing silence
The angel of my lust
She is tasting shame

Skydancer

Tracks 1 - 9 taken from the "Skydancer" album, originally released in 1993.
Recorded and mixed at Studio Soundscape, May/June 1993.

Backing vocals performed by Mikael Stanne and Anders Fridén.
All female vocals performed by Anna-Kajsa Avehall.
Male harmonic vocals performed by Mikael Stanne.
Additional harmonic vocals on "Shadow duet" and grunts on
"In tears bereaved" performed by Stefan Lindgren.
Acoustic guitars played by Niklas Sundin and Martin Henriksson.

Recording line-up:

Anders Fridén - voice
Mikael Stanne - guitar
Niklas Sundin - guitar
Martin Henriksson - bass
Anders Jivarp - drums

Of chaos and eternal night

Tracks 10 - 13 taken from the "Of chaos and eternal night" EP, originally released in 1995.
Tracks 10 - 12 recorded and mixed at Studio Fredman, Oct/Nov 1994.
Track 13 taken from the "Skydancer" recording and remixed with new vocals in Oct 1994.

Recording line-up:

Mikael Stanne - voice
Niklas Sundin - guitar
Fredrik Johansson - guitar
Martin Henriksson - bass
Anders Jivarp - drums

Remastered by Isak Edh at
Nacksving Studios in Aug 2013.

All music written and arranged by Dark Tranquillity.
All photos taken by Kenneth Johansson using Hasselblad equipment.
Layout by Cabin Fever Media.
Licenced to Century Media Records.

www.darktranquillity.com

About this release

We originally wanted this re-release to just be a replica of the original version; no liner notes by a band member or distinguished industry figure armchair philosophizing about past glories and musing over the impact and genius of the work in question. However, more than twenty years have passed since a bunch of unassuming teenagers knocked on the studio door ready to immortalize their quirky debut album, and seeing how the interest in the scene we helped to form such a long time ago has multiplied in recent times, I swiftly changed my mind and will attempt a trip down memory lane for the benefit of those who are curious.

What you're holding in your hand is a disc of thirteen songs. The first nine ones are taken from the "Skydancer" album, recorded in May/June 1993. The last four compositions are from "Of chaos and eternal night", a mini-CD that was recorded in the spring of 1994 in order to present our new line-up and shop for a new record deal. So - how did all this come about?

Prior to recording our debut album, we had managed to build up a decent reputation in the then emergent underground scene, primary due to our involvement with tapetrading. This probably sounds incredibly archaic to most of today's younger music lovers, but back then the main way to spread one's music was through selling and swapping physical demo cassettes with like-minded geeks around the globe. In order to get hold of a demo that seemed interesting, one usually needed to send cash (often a US five dollar bill) in a letter to a distant country and then wait for 2-3 months for the tape to find its way back to Sweden. Needless to say, the wait was often futile. Some countries were notorious for their thieving postal workers, and obviously a lot of musicians weren't the most organized people. Neither were we, but our boundless enthusiasm made us spend a lot of post-school time on these activities and as a result our demo and 7" recordings reached quite a lot of metalheads.

The highly recommended online 'zine archive sendback-mystamps.org alludes to the common practice of applying glue to the stamps used on the envelopes, which made it possible to wash away the post office stamp under hot water and then re-use the stamps for the next shipment. This caused more than one young metalhead to get upset phone calls from the postal workers threatening with legal action if the malicious practice didn't cease.

Anyway, after having sent away the "A moonclad reflection" 7" to pretty much every corner of the world and also making sure to spread a crude rehearsal recording of some newer songs around, we actually ended up with a decent amount of proposals for a real record deal. Most of these were from one-man bedroom companies that didn't exactly instill confidence and trust, but there was also a new and promising Finnish label showing interest. Spinefarm was then primary a distributor of heavy/alternative music in Finland (similar to what House of Kicks were in Sweden), but they had recently started their own record label imprint. Together with their presentation letter, they sent us samples in the form of Sentenced's "North from here" and Beherit's "Drawing down the moon" (both of course legendary albums by now) and their professionalism was obvious in every aspect - from the gold/silver ink used on the albums to the nicely typewritten letters. We all agreed that these were the right guys to release our debut album, and the dotted line was signed just in time for us to enter the studio in May 1993.

Soundscaping

We were well prepared and had rehearsed like madmen, but studio recordings back then were always hectic. The budget (which actually was very generous for its time) only allowed for ten studio days of recording and mixing, so there wasn't much room for fine-tuning or messing around, and we often had to use first takes even if they were far from perfect. Punch-ins were unheard of back then; every instrument had to play the entire song from the first to the last note, and making a too-obvious mistake meant having to start all

over again, which obviously added an additional element of stress to the process.

As a band, we had a fairly good idea of what we wanted to accomplish in the studio, but we lacked the experience and technical know-how to properly communicate it to the engineers, leading to a lot of tension and misunderstandings. We used the same facilities - Studio Soundscape - as for our previous demo and 7" recordings, and as the engineers were rockers of the AOR variety they weren't complete strangers to heavier music. However, underground metal with guttural vocals and blast beats was pretty far from their realm of understanding. Other than the studio frustration, which I'm sure that anyone recording a death metal album in the early 90's can relate to, the process was fairly smooth once we got everything set up, and there was no doubt that the studio itself was of a good standard. Work commenced day and night, after the final mixdown of all the songs to tape, we really felt like we were on to something fresh and original that the rest of the world needed to listen to as soon as possible.

Hasselblading

For the cover artwork and presentation, it was decided early on that we needed something different from the norm at the time. I had been doing illustrations for our previous demo and 7" releases, but felt like it was time for something else. Given the bombastic and pastoral nature of the lyrics, it felt suitable to go for a dramatic landscape photo; something that would signal a "presence" while still being a realistic depiction of nature, and since this was long before the internet made such things easy, I spent a few days with the yellow pages trying to locate a good photographer with access to an extensive image archive. When calling the local Hasselblad office, I stuck gold by finding Kenneth Johansson, who became our to-go photographer for many years and also ended up also working with other Swedish bands like In Flames, Arch Enemy and Naglfar. The choice of cover photo also affected the title of the album. There were a few other suggestions, but with the captivating sky/

forest/lake combo, "Skydancer" was a clear winner. If Kenneth would have happened to have a great photo of snow covered mountains, we probably had gone for "In the golden dawn of winter" instead, which honestly wouldn't have been too great. This re-issue is the first time where the photo is reproduced in all its detail and texture; the original scan of the picture left a lot to be desired, so the previous versions of the album feature a pretty dull and muddy representation.

Lyrics

Today, it's very hard for me (and probably for Mikael as well) to fully relate to the wealth of dictionary language, antiquated phrases and references to woodland deities that can be found in the lyrics, but for good and bad they remain a genuine document of what we wanted to represent as teenagers. Over time, we gradually replaced the "thy" and "thee" with more contemporary words, and the obsession with the unseen and quasi-mysticism gave way to a more personal and

We learned from Sabbath (UK), our biggest influence at the time, that metal could represent something serious and powerful and that there was no reason to settle for generic themes in the lyrics. We wanted grand and bombastic gestures that could match the level of detail found in the music and that would signal a larger-than-life approach to what we were trying to create. When looking at such insanely lengthy lyrics as those for "Shadow duet", it's clear that we didn't exactly subscribe to the "less is more" philosophy at the time. In hindsight, it probably would have been a good idea to allow the songs to breathe by not having vocal lines on every riff, but back then it was all about filling the void with as much information as possible and to stun the listener with unexpected twists and turns.

Skydancing

I admit to still being a bit impressed with how five people

with such little musical experience (none of us has played an instrument for more than 3.5 years at the time) could piece together and memorize compositions of this complexity. Some of the songs, for example "Nightfall by the shore of time" and "Skywards" feature a huge amount of riffs, most of which are never repeated twice in the same way. Rather, we viewed them as musical themes and utilized counterpoint to create new harmonies and variations.

Bands like Atheist and Nocturnus were an inspiration with their quirky and unpredictable arrangements, but we also listened to a lot of other stuff. During our first years as a band, our listening preferences were pretty much limited to metal only, but while composing the "Skydancer" songs, the increased musical skills led to the startling discovery that quality can be found in all sorts of genres. "Skydancer" even has traces of old Swedish folk music, something that's not very present on the later D.T. albums.

Since we were so focused on harmony, we wanted to treat the bass as a third guitar, which would open up even more room for melodic experiments. Martin played on a five-string bass and would often sacrifice the low ends in order to provide complex melody patterns in what's traditionally expected to be the guitar register. In addition, we were self-taught and had very little understanding of music theory, which means that many "rules" were violated in pretty much every song. This definitely is a major reason why "Skydancer" doesn't sound like any other album; if we had gone the normal route of taking instrument lessons and started out by playing covers rather than writing our own material from day one, I'm sure that our own songs would have been way more derivative of other bands.

The album was finally released in August 1993 - the long wait over the summer was gruelling - and while it might sound boastful to say that it got phenomenal reviews, it's really the case. Apart from the two leading Swedish metal magazines being a bit lukewarm (our conspiracy theory at the time was that the reviewers were too obsessed with every Swedish band having to conform to the Sunlight sound) and Kerrang! magazine giving it a 3 out of 5 rating, the

response was as good as it can get. For some years we hosted an archive of scanned and re-typed reviews on our website, which obviously would have been a great addition to this booklet, but unfortunately it's long lost.

"Skydancer" was a rare beast. It has the kind of naive enthusiasm and will to define the world that only young artists can get away with. It's unashamedly pretentious and ambitious, both music and lyrics, and it stood out like a sore thumb at the time of release. We previously had been labelled a death metal band, but with songs like these it was obvious that monicker only could define a portion of our sound. Things like acoustic guitars, clear vocals and keyboards were very rare in those days, and most of the bands that experimented with those elements were from the doom genre. Some reviewers even heard violins and authentic choirs in the music, which made us think that we should have tried that out as well.

In retrospect, the only thing that irks me about the album is the thin sound. I always felt that the live and rehearsal recordings of the songs sounded more interesting than their album equivalents - more fierce, richer in texture and intensity. On this digital remaster, we've tried to bring back some of the low end and punch that was missing on the original version, and it was very satisfying to finally hear some of the details that previously were buried beneath the surface.

Of chaos

Shortly before the album release, the band amicably parted ways with vocalist Anders Fridén, who went on to join Ceremonial oath and later was recruited to In flames. Mikael Stanne had been providing backing vocals during rehearsals and shows for quite a while and gradually discovered that he actually enjoyed it far more than playing the rhythm guitar. In addition, our music was constantly progressing in a more technical and musically demanding direction, so after some thought he suggested that he'd make the switch to lead vocals and that we should start looking around for a

